

WASHINGTON, DC - Congressman Steny Hoyer released the following statement in recognition of the new class of astronauts sworn in by NASA at the Air and Space Museum today.

"I applaud the new class of astronaut candidates who have been selected by NASA this year. I especially congratulate Richard Arnold II from Bowie, Maryland. I join a proud and grateful community today as Mr. Arnold is recognized for his exceptional talents.

"Throughout American history, individuals stand out who dream beyond the limits of the imagination and conceive of accomplishing the extraordinary by visiting new worlds and exploring new horizons. Through their sacrifice and commitment, America has become safer, stronger, and more humane.

"This nation was barely 15 years old when Meriwether Lewis and William Clark struck out on the western side of the Mississippi and dared us to discover. John F. Kennedy had been president less than 10 minutes before he dared us to move beyond the Earth's atmosphere to explore the unknown.

"Today, a new class of astronaut candidates will join this body of innovative pioneers as they commit themselves to finding answers to the great mysteries of Earth and space. I salute Richard Arnold as our own hometown hero and one of our century's newest explorers. We are indebted to you for your service."

This is the first new class of astronauts selected by NASA since 2000. Richard R. Arnold II from Bowie, Maryland has been selected as one of NASA's educator mission specialists. The class begins training this summer at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston.

Richard Arnold was born in Cheverly, MD and received his B.A. in Science and Accounting from Frostburg State and M.A. in Marine Estuarine and Environmental Science from the University of Maryland at College Park. He presently teaches math and science at the American International School of Bucharest in Bucharest, Romania. His parents, Richard and Nancy D. Arnold live in Bowie, Maryland.

Information about the Educator Astronaut Program is available on the Internet at:
http://education.nasa.gov/divisions/eleandsec/overview/F_pathfinder_edu_astronaut.html

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